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April 6, 2010

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"Louisiana homeowners with toxic Chinese drywall have been waiting in limbo for months, unsure of what they must do to make their homes safe again," said Rep.

Melancon.

"With the federal government's announcement last Friday that drywall victims should completely gut their homes, it is crystal clear how serious a problem we are facing.

"Now that we know what must be done to fix the problem, I will be working with our state and local leaders to help Louisiana families make their homes safe again. We must fight for legislation both in Washington and here in Louisiana that will hold accountable the manufacturers who sold defective drywall to homeowners. These companies are not playing by our safety rules, and Americans are paying the price.

"And we must also hold insurance companies accountable, so they don't drop coverage for homeowners with Chinese drywall. My bill, the Drywall Victims Insurance Protection Act, would give homeowners peace of mind that they won't lose their insurance while they repair their homes, and I will fight to get it passed in Congress."

On Friday, the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission released official guidance recommending that homeowners with toxic Chinese drywall remove all possible problem drywall from their homes. The CPSC also recommended that homeowners with the defective drywall replace electrical components and wiring, gas service piping, fire suppression sprinkler systems, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. More information is posted online at www.drywallresponse.gov

Congressman Melancon has been an advocate in Congress for Louisiana homeowners with

toxic Chinese drywall in their homes. Congressman Melancon has co-sponsored [bipartisan legislation](#) that would hold foreign manufacturers accountable for selling defective and dangerous products like Chinese drywall in the United States. The Foreign Manufacturers Legal Accountability Act (H.R. 4678) would help protect American consumers and businesses from defective products manufactured abroad by requiring foreign companies to register an agent who would answer for them in a U.S. court of law.

Last November, Congressman Melancon [authored legislation](#) to prevent insurance companies from cancelling or failing to renew homeowners' policies as the result of Chinese drywall in the home. The Drywall Victims Insurance Protection Act (H.R. 4094) would prevent insurance companies from cancelling or failing to renew homeowners' policies as the result of finding Chinese drywall in the home. The bill would also prevent insurers from changing rates or altering the type or amount of coverage based on problems stemming from Chinese drywall. The Drywall Victims Insurance Protection Act would also protect homeowners' rights to sue their insurance companies if their coverage is dropped because of Chinese drywall problems.

Last month, Congressman Melancon [sent a letter](#) to the nation's top fire official requesting his assistance in protecting homeowners from toxic Chinese drywall. In his letter to U.S. Fire Administrator Kelvin Cochran, Congressman Melancon noted that corrosion of electrical wiring caused by toxic Chinese drywall could pose a serious fire hazard for homeowners.

Many homeowners have reported that defective Chinese drywall in their homes emits sulfur, methane and other fumes that have damaged their homes and pose a serious health risk for residents. Reported health problems include nosebleeds, respiratory ailments, headaches, insomnia, and skin irritation.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 7 million sheets of Chinese drywall were imported between 2000 and 2009 - enough to have built tens of thousands of homes. Some consumer advocates have estimated that the cost of property damage could reach \$3 billion. The problem could become especially serious in Louisiana, where thousands of new homes were rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina, many using Chinese drywall.

Over 3,000 homeowners nationwide have filed Chinese drywall complaints with the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Homeowners who suspect they may have contaminated drywall are encouraged to file complaints with the Louisiana Recovery Authority by going to <http://lra.louisiana.gov/> and clicking on the "contaminated drywall information" button. Consumers are also encouraged to file complaints with the [Louisiana Attorney General's Office](#) at 800-351-4889 or www.agbuddycaldwell.com and the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/index.html

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